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STATINTL

2 April 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Talk to the Overseas Press Club

1. There follows a preview of the possible questions that will be asked you and some suggestions as to the answers and other statements that you may wish to make in your talk to the Overseas Press Club on 3 April. It is my recommendation that inasmuch as your audience will probably include some Americans and possibly others to whom we would not wish to reveal classified information, that you make your talk "not for attribution" rather than "off the record". The difference between the two is that your audience will be able to use your material in their writings without attributing it to you, whereas "off the record" would preclude any use of it whatsoever. It gives them a better break and inasmuch as you will be using unclassified information, will give you a better audience reaction.

2. My recommendations for the general body of the talk include the following. Inasmuch as General Smith addressed the Overseas Press Club two years ago, at which you were present, I have made this a slightly different approach.

The Central Intelligence Agency considers itself as the first line of defense of the country. It is our belief that only when intelligence fails will it be necessary for the military forces to take action. If there is no failure in intelligence, then our policy makers will be kept continually advised, well in advance, of the diplomatic and military moves of all nations, particularly those hostile to this country. Obviously, this is the ideal goal of a perfect intelligence organization and, equally obviously, the Central Intelligence Agency is too young to have had approximated this goal.

This lead could be followed with a general description of the responsibility of the Central Intelligence Agency to the National Security Council; a description of the processing of intelligence from the flow of raw intelligence into the organization from all sources, through the production of finished intelligence studies such as the basic volumes on every country and strategic commodity, to the production of National Estimates. The actual process of producing National Estimates is an apt subject for discussion and expansion, and gives you a chance to point out to your audience the coordination functions of the agency.

Of course, this group will be interested in the clandestine aspects of our organization, and to completely ignore them in your discussion would simply leave you open to more pointed questions at the conclusion. In the several talks that I have given, I have generally treated the subject in somewhat the following manner: "While there are

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probably clandestine operations conducted by the United States Government, it is the general policy not to advertise which agency has the responsibility for these operations or the manner in which they are conducted, because this only gives aid and comfort to those forces hostile to the American way of life. Suffice it to say that it is the policy of the Government to fight fire with fire and to give all possible assistance to the forces of freedom and combat the forces of oppression".

3. Here are some of the questions which will probably be directed at you:

a) Q: Do you use newspapermen in your work overseas?

A: To do so would prove a serious detriment to the effectiveness of our overseas journalists and raise serious questions as to the integrity of the American press.

b) Q: How good is our intelligence service?

A: No intelligence service is as good as it wants to be or should be. We have certain gaps in the information which we need. However, our information is constantly improving and we are able to keep our policy makers better informed than they have been before.

c) Q: Is the United States Government supporting the Chinese Nationalist Forces in Burma or has it ever done so?

A: The Government is not supporting these forces and is anxious to assist the Burmese in eliminating this cause of friction. However, this is a matter under the purview of the Department of State.

d) Q: What is CIA's estimate of future Soviet intentions?

A: This has been a matter of interest to the CIA ever since its organization. We constantly follow all Soviet activities to determine their intentions, peaceful or otherwise. The death of Stalin of course injected a new but not unforeseen element into the Soviet picture. (Allen: I phrased the above in this fashion in order to counteract certain newspaper publicity to the effect that the death of Stalin caught the psychological effort of the Government unprepared. You may wish to add to it some thoughts as to how we do feel about Soviet intentions.)

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e: Q: Are there Communists or subversives in CIA?

A: Not to my knowledge. We are constantly thoroughly investigating all new employees and keeping a careful check on all of our present employees. Obviously, as General Smith once pointed out and received wide publicity for his frank admission, there is always the danger that a highly trained long-term Soviet espionage agent could infiltrate our agency as well as any other part of the Government. However, we are constantly alert to this danger and together with the FBI exerting our best efforts to prevent it from happening to us or to any part of the United States Government.

f: Q: Why did the "important administrative official" of the CIA kill himself the other day?

A: As far as we can determine this was a case in which the pressure of the work became too great for the individual. This is a matter of extreme regret to me as would be the loss of any of our people, but particularly so in this case as I had worked with the individual over a period of years. You should all understand that the nature of our work is such that the pressure on the individual can become quite great. We do our best through careful supervision as well as periodic medical check-ups to prevent this from happening, but unhappily it does occur.

g: Q: Were the two newspapermen who were captured by the Communists off Hong Kong working for CIA?

A: No.

There probably will be questions on most of the hot spots throughout the world. In addition, of course there will be a lot of specific questions as to intelligence operations, most of which I would recommend making no comment on.

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